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O.C. opts to shelve digital vaccine record

Supervisors vote to 'pause' the program after hundreds of people speak out against it at a meeting on Tuesday.

BY BEN BRAZIL

Orange County won't for the time being offer a digital vaccination record to residents after hundreds of people spoke out against nonexistent "vaccine passports" at a county Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday.

At least 600 people held a rally outside the meeting and took to the podium to urge the board not to allow a COVID-19 vaccine passport in the county, even though officials have repeatedly said participation in the program would not be a requirement.

In response to the public outcry, the board ended up voting 4-1 to "pause" a plan to offer a digital vaccination record to residents who request it. Supervisor Katrina Foley cast the only dissenting vote.

Much of the movement against the record seems to stem from confusion around the county's announcement in early April that it would be starting a vaccine "passport" program, prompting immediate uproar from some residents. The announcement

"...this (voluntary digital record provision) was intended as a courtesy and not a mandate. There is no vote to mandate vaccine passports. Anyone suggesting otherwise is directly harming the county's public health and vaccination outreach efforts."

— **Katrina Foley**
O.C. supervisor

came amid a national conversation over potential government-issued vaccine passports, which the state and federal government aren't requiring.

At a mid-April board meeting about a week after the announcement, Orange County Health Care Agency Director Clayton Chau clarified that the county was not considering a vaccine passport but rather will offer a voluntary

See **Vaccine**, page R5



ABOVE: A store owner alters hanbok, traditional Korean clothing worn for celebrations, in her shop which is one of a few in Orange County.

Courtesy Ivy Duong

RIGHT: While working at Target as a cashier, Sidra Ali encountered an Asian mother who told her how difficult it was to find supplies that she needed like baby wipes because people kept buying them for general cleaning purposes.

Courtesy Sidra Ali

FAR RIGHT: UCI student housing residents, like Grace Choe, are prohibited from using the common room in the dorms while they share the same restrooms, kitchens and laundry facilities. Furniture from the common room was wrapped in the middle of the space.

Courtesy Grace Choe



Courtesy Ivy Duong

Hearing stories with open eyes

Through UC Irvine's VOICE project, researchers used photography to capture the pandemic's impact on AAPI communities.



BY VERA CASTANEDA

Last spring, a group of UC Irvine staff and students who work across departments in Asian American studies, public health and the university library's Southeast Asian archive began discussing a project that would help document the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

They settled on a project based on photography or a photovoice research technique in which participants use a camera to document and express experiences from their own point of view. The intention of the technique is to foster community empowerment and social change in an ethical way that minimizes the power dynamics between the researcher and the researched.

"We found it to be a really compelling methodology. A lot of research approaches tend to

rely on words and texts," said Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, a project lead and director of the UCI Humanities Center. "This really foregrounds the visual and allowed us to sort of step in the shoes of people who are experiencing the pandemic. There's also more of the emotional impact of thinking about photographs. It's foregrounding the voices of people who are experiencing the pandemic because we want to hear their stories."

By the fall, a diverse group of 24 UC Irvine undergraduates were selected to be part of a research project called Visualizing Our Identities and Cultures for Empowerment or VOICE. The project focused on Orange County, which is made up of the third largest AAPI population in the country. However, the students were well into distance learning and spread out throughout California — O.C.,

See **Eyes**, page R4

ABOVE LEFT: Workers at the hair salon plastic wrapped chairs and created plastic barriers that they can move around the stations. The barriers are made from plastic, hair clips, and movable stands in order to create an extra source of protection.

Courtesy Ivy Duong

ABOVE RIGHT: Emma Hong Nguyen's cat, Leo Candy Nguyen, acting like a classmate sitting next to her. Her companion made her feel less lonely during a distance-learning year when it was difficult to make new friends.

Courtesy Emma Hong Nguyen

O.C. plumeria growers help stem the losses of a Texas cold snap

BY LORI BASHEDA

When David Konishi lost his plumerias in the Orange County freeze of 2007, complete strangers mailed him cuttings from their own trees so he could rebuild his collection.

Humbled, Konishi vowed that one day, if ever called to do so, he would pay it forward. That day arrived this past February.

Konishi, who owns Konishi Plumeria in Cypress, was on his plumeria growers Facebook group when messages started popping up from Texans who were helplessly watching their deliciously scented tropical trees die in a freak cold snap.

Houston is home to the Plumeria Society of America, so there are a lot of growers in that state. Plumeria, heat-lovers native to the tropics, need to be protected when the temperature drops below 40.

That's why growers build greenhouses for wintertime. And if you don't have a greenhouse, you have a plan to haul your plumerias into your house (even digging them out of the ground if you have to)



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

PLUMERIA PLANTS grown from seeds at Konishi Plumeria in Cypress.

when weather forecasters warn that a cold snap is coming.

But who has a plan for a power outage on top of a freeze? Without heat in their homes, Texans had no chance of saving their collections. Specimens, some decades old, perished within hours; branches just falling off, bleeding brown mush.

"I live in Texas and lost all my plumeria in the arctic blast," a

See **Plumerias**, page R5



Courtesy of the L.A. Arboretum

PLUMERIAS BLOSSOM DURING the L.A. Arboretum's Plumeria Day on July 20, 2019, in Arcadia.

Irvine council opposes Musick jail expansion

The city votes to put pressure on the Board of Supervisors to hold a public meeting to address residents' concerns.

BY BEN BRAZIL

Irvine's decades-long fight to stop the expansion of the controversial James A. Musick jail is not over yet.

The Irvine City Council voted Tuesday night to put pressure on the county Board of Supervisors to hold a public meeting on the issue. The board approved a \$261-million construction contract for the expansion last year.

The item was proposed by Mayor Farrah Khan and Vice Mayor Tammy Kim at the urging of the Stop the Musick Coalition, a group of social justice organizations in Orange County working to halt the expansion.

"Unfortunately we've reached a point where we've exhausted all legal resources or all legal avenues to stop the county of Orange from pushing through with this expansion," Kim said at the meeting.

"But I agree that a resolution affirming our strong opposition to this expansion will demonstrate our values as a city. And furthermore, I hope this resolution will send a strong message to the Orange County Board of Supervisors by urging them to hold a public meeting to address the concerns of our residents, whom they were elected to serve."

The council initially discussed the Musick facility in mid-April after the coalition requested it. The coalition specifically chose to get the city of Irvine involved due to its history with the facility.

City leaders over the years have taken issue with the jail's proximity to residential neighborhoods, the Orange County Great Park and Portola High School and has filed four unsuccessful lawsuits on the matter.

At the mid-April council meeting, the council seemed to conclude that there wasn't much the city could do because it doesn't have land-use authority over the jail, which sits on county property surrounded by Irvine and Lake Forest. Councilman Larry Agran, who has served on the council periodically since the late 1970s, said that the council should engage with county supervisors, particularly Supervisor Don Wagner, who represents Irvine and used to be



THE COUNTY Board of Supervisors approved a \$261-million construction contract last year for the expansion of the James A. Musick jail.

File Photo
Los Angeles Times

mayor of the city.

During Tuesday's meeting, Agran said he hopes the Board of Supervisors quickly take action.

"It would be very unfortunate if the Board of Supervisors just sat on it and did not honor the request with the scheduling of a meeting," Agran said. "So I assume, Mayor, that you and the Vice Mayor will be conveying the importance of this in the strongest terms to our own supervisor as well as to the other supervisors, in the hope that this will be on their agenda in a matter of weeks, not deferred for months."

The coalition believes the \$289 million — not including operating costs — devoted to the addition of nearly 900 new beds to the Musick facility are unnecessary because the county's jail population has decreased.

The coalition — which includes Transforming Justice Orange County, the ACLU of Southern California and the People's Budget, among other groups — also believes that incarceration is not an effective treatment for social ills, and the money could be better spent on social programs that address the root causes of crime.

Coalition member Chelsea Drake said in a phone interview that it was also important that the council stated its opposition to the Musick expansion in Tues-

day's resolution.

"It was a step in the right direction, we are considering it a win," Drake said. "It's definitely not the end, we consider it the beginning. We are hoping the City Council continues to support our efforts opposing the expansion."

Drake said the coalition has requested for the city to support a separate, independent public forum in Irvine to educate residents on the expansion.

"We want to do something specifically for Irvine residents because it's so close and a lot of people don't know about it," Drake said.

Spreading awareness is currently the coalition's primary focus.

"We think that one of the reasons the Musick expansion is happening is because the Orange County Board of Supervisors snuck it through," said Jacob Reisinger, a member of the coalition and a jails conditions advocate with the ACLU of Southern California. "There was zero public debate and zero public education about the harms that the expansion would cause to the community, both financial and moral. So we think the only way to repair that is to have that public education. We are calling on the Irvine City Council to help make that happen."

Sheriff's spokeswoman Carrie

Braun said in mid-April that the average daily jail population is down to 3,300. It was 5,200 before the pandemic.

A judge ordered Sheriff Don Barnes in December to cut the jail population in half due to COVID-19 outbreaks among inmates.

The Musick jail has sat empty for the last two years.

The O.C. Sheriff's Department previously had a controversial contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to house ICE detainees at the Musick jail. In 2019, Barnes ended that agreement, and the Musick jail facility was emptied.

The department held at the time that the agreement was terminated to make space for the increasing need for mental health beds in the county's jails.

The expansion includes adding two new housing structures and 896 new beds, which will bring the total beds at the Musick facility to about 2,200. The expansion will bring the total beds in Orange County jails to almost 7,500, according to stats provided by Braun.

Braun said that jails have seen a nationwide increase in the number of inmates with mental illnesses. In 2015, Orange County had an average of 1,220 daily open mental health cases, she said. In 2019, that number had increased

by 54% to 1,886 cases, meaning about two in five inmates required mental health treatment.

"Musick is not a mental health jail," Braun said in an email last month. "It is the responsibility of the Sheriff's Department to provide for the care and custody of incarcerated individuals who have broken criminal law. The beds at Musick are designed to be capable of accommodating inmates with minor mental health illness issues if needed. Those with more serious mental health issues are housed at other O.C. jail facilities."

"While inmates are in our care, the sheriff has committed to ensure they are kept safe, provided opportunities to reach mental health stability and/or sobriety if needed and have access to programs that will reduce the likelihood of recidivism upon release."

Braun said construction began on the Musick facility in August and is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. Inmates are estimated to be moved in by February 2023, she said.

Kim took aim at the mental health component of the jail during Tuesday's council meeting.

"We cannot jail our way out of this public health crisis," Kim said.

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com
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Majority of Anaheim council doesn't support 'hero' pay for grocery workers

BY BEN BRAZIL

A majority of Anaheim's City Council members are not in favor of approving hero pay for local grocery and pharmacy workers who many argue have put themselves in harm's way during the pandemic to provide essential services to the community.

The council discussed the issue on Tuesday night at the request of Councilman Jose Moreno. Members did not vote on the matter, though the item will be brought back before the council at the next meeting.

Orange County cities that have approved hazard pay for grocery workers include Irvine, Santa Ana, Buena Park and Costa Mesa. Those cities mandated hero pay for a temporary period starting in February and March.

"We are still in the midst of the pandemic, we are still in the midst of folks struggling to work with customers on the front line who may not believe in vaccines or masking," Moreno said.

"We do know that for 14 months there has been one industry that has been open, that has been a savior to many of us. We've all highlighted the incredible heroic efforts beyond our healthcare workers is those in our grocery stores. Because essentially the most important aspect of our society is making sure that we can have access to goods that we depend on.

"Many of them have had to defer their rent, credit card bills, car payments, forbearance on mortgages. And while there may be some federal and state support, that tends to focus on those who are unemployed. So I really believe that it's an economic hazard that our employees and our community members and our neighbors are facing. They are still likely the few who are working in their household in an already-stressed rental environ-



Luis Sinco

A CASHIER helps a customer at the checkout stand in a Vons grocery store in Long Beach.

ment."

Several cities — including Oakland, Seattle, Santa Monica, San Jose, Montebello and Long Beach — have adopted hazard pay for grocery and pharmacy store workers, though the ordinances have not been without controversy. The California Grocers Assn. has sued many of these cities, including Irvine and Santa Ana.

Supporters of hero pay argue that grocery store workers deserve a wage hike due to the hazardous conditions they've endured over the last year. They also suggest the grocery industry should share some of its profits made during the pandemic with employees.

Those in opposition to hero pay contend that the government shouldn't be determining raises, and cities may face costly lawsuits.

Councilman Avelino Valencia generally agreed with Moreno but said he would like any hero pay ordinance to be a \$3 hourly bump in pay for 60 days. Moreno and Councilman Jordan Brandman were open to Valencia's proposal.

As the discussion progressed, Mayor Harry Sidhu and council members Trevor O'Neil, Jose Diaz and Stephen Faessel expressed opposition to hero pay.

Diaz said he doesn't support it because "the market" should determine how much an employee gets paid, not the government. Sidhu said it's unnecessary to adopt hazard pay because the state is set to fully reopen next month. He also said raising grocery worker pay could lead to a rise in grocery prices.

O'Neil said he didn't support hero pay because many industries have suffered during the pandemic, and the city shouldn't single out a single profession.

"We have thousands and thousands of Anaheim workers that have lost their jobs during the pandemic, and here we are talking about higher wages for a small group of workers who were fortunate enough to keep their jobs," O'Neil said. "I certainly understand the value of these workers and I appreciate their service of the community in doing their jobs. But every one of us has, in some way, been impacted by the pandemic.

"There are many different types of essential workers, yet here we are talking about one narrow class of workers. All of these workers should be thanked for the work that they've continued to do during the pandemic."

A few Anaheim grocery workers showed up to the meeting to voice their support for the wage hike. Many described the harsh conditions they have had to endure and the risk to their health and that of their families.

Gladys Gonzalez, a pharmacy technician at a CVS in Anaheim, said she couldn't visit her mother during the pandemic because she didn't want to expose her to the virus. Her mother ended up passing away. She urged the council to approve hero pay.

"No money will ever bring back the time I lost not seeing my mom before she passed away," she said.

Brenda Ruiz, who works at El Super, said she wanted to stop going to work and risking the health of her family, but she didn't have a choice because she needed to pay rent. She ended up contracting the coronavirus last year and had to be confined away from her son.

Noah Stevens, who works at Ralphs, said grocery stores have become greedy and need to provide extra pay to their employees.

"I want to be able to feel physically safe as well as financially secure," he said.

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com
Twitter: @benbrazil

EYES

Continued from page R1

Fresno, Ontario, Oxnard and Sacramento.

Part of the strategy to connect student researchers to the local AAPI community was teaming up with staff from six non-profit organizations: the Cambodian Family, Korean Community Services Health Center, the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance, the Pacific Islander Health Partnership, the South Asian Network and the Vietnamese American Cancer Foundation.

The students held virtual focus groups to discuss their photos, archived materials and made their project public.

"For our students, it's been a very difficult time with the pandemic," Wu said. "There's issues about mental health, economic insecurity ... they're trying to do homework as they may be helping to care for their families. There's a lot of stress on their lives. Being able to capture and share some of those experiences was something that was very empowering for them."

The result was intimate views of a hanbok shop owner at work, health-related restrictions of dorm life, a grandmother passing down her homemade samosa recipe, tools an asthmatic essential worker needs to leave the house, empty Sikh temples and a cat resting his head on a laptop.

The public showcase for their work was set for a day after the Atlanta shooting, but they decided to postpone their kickoff event and hold space for a conversation to process the shooting instead.

Later in the spring, they held a virtual exhibit titled "Through Our Eyes, Hear Our Stories," launched a website showcasing the photos and created an Instagram account (which is still actively posting photos).

A subcommittee of students, who received

funding from the university's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, held one of the first workshops earlier this week for Anaheim middle and high school students teaching a curriculum plan on how to use the photo voice technique and identify social issues they want to address.

Sorina Neang Long, who focused on co-creating the teaching curriculum, said, "We talked about participatory action and civic engagement. They were really into it, which was exciting. At their age, I was confused about everything. I feel like I've just recently discovered methods like photovoice that people can use in their communities to share their stories."

Now, the VOICE researchers have a proposal in the works to get funding to continue the project. They are interested in capturing California reopening and examining what love looks like in a time of hate.

TimesOC checked in with five VOICE student researchers to talk about the most memorable photos they took in 2020.

ANNIE MY PHAN Vietnamese American, Public Health Science major

Phan currently lives in Little Saigon. When she heard about the project, she knew she wanted to do research related to her community. She decided to take on mental health as a subject, bringing in her experiences as a student and a high school tutor. Phan took a photo of her work desk area located in her bedroom. Throughout COVID-19, the area changed from a comfortable space to a source of stress and anxiety.

"In the AAPI community mental health is not really something that's addressed," Phan said. "In high school for my students, it's a very competitive environment because we're trying to get to the

See **Eyes**, page R6

MY HOUSE HAD OUTGROWN ME.

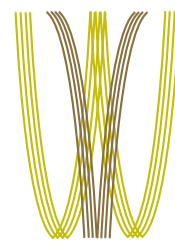
Donna
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There was a time when I enjoyed all that space. But the last few years, it just became far more than I wanted to deal with. At Walnut Village I have my own place that fits me perfectly, and the freedom to do other things. New things. With new people. Home is where the heart is, and mine is here.



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Muckenthaler Center's Jazz Festival returns after hiatus

The Muckenthaler Cultural Center's Jazz Festival was set to return last Thursday and run through June 17.

The center has held virtual and private art exhibitions, created art kits for local families, co-hosted drive-in movie theater showings with Frida Cinema and completed its sculpture garden within the past year.

However, its facilities have been closed with limited capacity.

The six-week run marks the first

live shows in its outdoor amphitheater since the start of COVID-19, which set off an unprecedented closure.

Some of the festival's performances include jazz-country fusion band called Cowbop featuring Bruce Forman, the L.A. Jazz Quartet featuring Larry Koonse, vocalist Barbara Morrison, Grammy-winning pianist Bill Cunliffe and vocalist Don Most, who is also known for his acting role on

"Happy Days."

The full season lineup is available online as well as tickets, which will be paperless.

Capacity for the festival remains limited.

Social distancing and face masks will be required.

Although the center is encouraging vaccinations, they are not required to attend the outdoor festival.

— From staff reports

IF YOU GO

What: Jazz Festival

Where: 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton
When: Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. May 20, May 27, June 3, June 10, June 17

Cost: \$150 for a season pass or \$35 per performance

Info: (714) 738-6595; themuck.org

PLUMERIAS

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woman named Nelda posted on Facebook. "My heart is broken, so many hours ... nurturing them for years."

And from a woman named Monica: "Lost my plumeria that I brought home from Hawaii 24 years ago as a gift to my mother. Heartbroken as she passed, and the plant was like a memorial."

Konishi, who figures he has spent at least \$10,000 on his own private plumeria collection at his home in Cerritos, said he actually spoke with some of the growers.

"There were people crying to me on the phone," he said. "And I understood what they were going through."

A few told him they were too devastated — and/or broke — to start again. A



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

OWNER DAVID KONISHI inside of his shop in Cypress.

single branch can cost anywhere from \$20 to up to several hundred dollars for one of the trendier varieties. And mature plants cost even more.

"We had some private moments, and they said goodbye," he said.

Konishi started snapping branches off of his own trees and rallying the troops

on his Facebook growers group, which has members as far as Malaysia, Indonesia, Africa and Iceland. He would pay for shipping if they didn't have the money; just send him the receipts.

In case you're not familiar with plumeria, by the way, you should know they might be the easiest plant to mail. Just break off a branch,

wrap it in some newspaper, drop it in a box and send. All the recipient needs to do upon arrival is stick it in some dirt, water it and put it in the sun.

Konishi wasn't the only Orange County plumeria fanatic to spring into action.

C.d. Larson encountered his first plumeria in Tahiti in 1985. Now he has a dozen mature trees at his Foothill Ranch home; making leis with their blossoms to wear around town during the summer months.

"People look at me like, 'Did you win something?'"

It warms his heart to see plumeria trees festooning countless yards throughout Southern California, many grown from branches people brought back from their honeymoons.

"There's a certain romance to that," he said.

So when he saw the social media posts from Texans watching their trees collapse, he was "just shred-

ded."

He started snapping off branches in his own backyard to ship to the Lone Star State — and reached out to Jaki Kamphuis, a professor at Orange Coast College and president of the South Coast Plumeria Society. She organized a cutting drive.

"People were posting pictures of their plumerias covered with snow," Kamphuis said. "It would be devastating. We kind of treat them like our babies."

A self-described "plumeria addict," she confesses to at one point mothering about 300 of the tropical trees at her Huntington Beach home.

"For me it's all about the fragrance," she said. "Some smell like roses, some smell like peaches or Bazooka bubble gum." Even suntan lotion.

"There are so many varieties (over 500). That's why people have so many plants."

Plumeria Society of America President Ray Allison, a commercial Realtor in Houston, said he has been overwhelmed by the response.

"We were getting phone calls from people who wanted to help, and we were 'Hey, we haven't even thawed out yet!'" Allison said.

He reckons he's received 1,500 donated cuttings, more than half of them from the Southern California plumeria community, with clubs in Ventura and San Diego counties also coming to the rescue.

"It warms my heart to hear so many people offering to donate for those of us here in Texas that have lost so much," a woman named Michelle posted on the society's Facebook page. "Thank you so much for your compassion and generosity!"

LORI BASHEDA is a contributor to TimesOC.

A WOMAN receives a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in Huntington Beach on Jan. 13.



Raul Roa
Staff
Photographer

VACCINE

Continued from page R1

digital vaccination record for residents who request it in the form of a QR code in the Othena app, which the county has used for scheduling coronavirus testing and COVID-19 vaccinations. Close to 200 people spoke out against vaccine passports at that meeting.

Supervisors have also sought to allay the concerns of the public, repeatedly pointing out that the county is not considering a mandatory vaccine passport.

But the assurances of county officials have fallen on deaf ears, as hundreds of members of the public have overtaken the last few Board of Supervisors meetings to rail against the idea of vaccine passports. Many of those protesters have compared the idea to practices of the Nazis, who murdered an estimated 6 million Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Some of the attendees have worn yellow stars on their arms during the meetings, meant to symbolize the yellow stars of David that the Nazis forced Jewish people to wear. The Jewish community has criticized the comparison.

During Tuesday's meeting, board Chairman Andrew Do limited speakers to 30 seconds due to the high volume of public commenters. The speakers continued to compare vaccine passports to Nazi Germany and other tyrannical governments.

As with other meetings, speakers regularly invoked the power of God and told supervisors that they will be "judged" for their actions. More than one speaker referenced the Book of Revelations, the apocalyptic book of the Bible.

"My forefathers fought for my freedom to be able to choose," one woman said at the meeting. "This isn't communist Russia. This isn't communist China. This isn't Nazi Germany. The Jews had passports, look what that led to."

Do made the motion to "pause" the development of the digital vaccination record, he said, because it is deterring some residents from getting vaccinated.

"We have come to the

point where the noise around this whole vaccine passport has reached a point where it's becoming counterproductive," Do said. "... So what I'm proposing today is, in order that we can move ahead with vaccination, that we say definitively today that Orange County will stop moving ahead in establishing any kind of digital record, any QR code, anything involving vaccination, beyond the CDC paper card that we get when we get vaccinated."

In a couple of heated exchanges with other supervisors, Foley came out against Do's motion and said it would only appease a small faction of the community.

She pointed out that the people speaking out against the vaccine passports repeatedly say they don't believe in the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, so not offering the digital record won't encourage anyone else to get vaccinated.

"I feel very strongly that the supermajority of the community that we serve support having a convenient digital record so that they can go about living their lives," Foley said.

Foley added that she was concerned the public wasn't able to voice its support for the digital record because Do's proposal wasn't put on the agenda.

"I don't think that the public comments here today reflect a balanced view on the issue," Foley said.

Foley further clarified her stance on the issue in a statement that was released following the vote.

"The voluntary digital record provision would have provided a convenient option for individuals, should they need to show proof of vaccination for access to businesses and entertainment venues," Foley said. "As I have previously stated, this was intended as a courtesy and not a mandate. There is no vote to mandate vaccine passports. Anyone suggesting otherwise is directly harming the county's public health and vaccination outreach efforts. This misinformation campaign is led by the same people who deny COVID-19 and have opposed vaccines and masks altogether."

Supervisor Doug Chaffee expressed concern that it

may be difficult for people to replace their vaccination card if it gets lost and said he hoped the county would provide an easy way to replace it. However, he didn't add anything to the motion.

County Chief Executive Frank Kim clarified that people will still be able to look up that they've been vaccinated in their personal profile on the Othena app. Do's motion concerns the QR code that would have been used by businesses or other third parties to verify that someone has been vaccinated. The public outcry and vote to pause the QR code come as the county is dealing with how to combat vaccine hesitancy among the public.

For the most part, California's recent success against the virus has been the public's willingness to get vaccinated, data show. Yet some remain hesitant for a number of reasons, some of which may be fueled by misinformation.

Last week, the county's mostly right-wing Board of Education approved a statement against mandatory vaccinations and a resolution against digital vaccine passports.

Several residents spoke at the public comment section against vaccine passports, echoing similar sentiments to those expressed at the Board of Supervisors meetings. One woman said she doesn't want to become a genetically modified organism from taking the vaccine, and another said a vaccine passport is in violation of the Nuremberg Trials, the military tribunals held after World War II to prosecute Nazis who took part in the Holocaust and committed war crimes.

Andrew Noymer, a UC Irvine professor of population health and disease prevention, said the Board of Education is stirring the pot by reinforcing and echoing the beliefs of people who are hesitant to get a vaccine.

"What the O.C. Board of Education is doing is making a statement that they won't allow involuntary vaccination of Orange County children, but nobody's saying that that's going to happen," Noymer said.

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com
Twitter: @benbrazil

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CONTACT US

Erik Haugli
Deputy Editor
erik.haugli@latimes.com

Raymond Arroyo
Advertising Director
(714) 966-4608
ray.arroyo@latimes.com

Online
timesoc.com
Social Media
[@timesocofficial](https://www.facebook.com/timesocofficial)

Address
10540 Talbert Ave.,
Suite 300 West,
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
Business Office
(714) 966-4600
Newsroom
(714) 966-4699
Email
dailypilot@latimes.com
TCN Classifieds
800-234-4444

TCN Legal Phone
888-881-6181

TCN Legal Email
LAlegal@tribune.com

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Courtesy Annie Phan

A VIEW OF Annie Phan's work zone located in her bedroom, which she describes as changing from a comfortable place to an area of stress and anxiety resulting from distance learning as both a student and an educator.

EYES

Continued from page R4

best colleges and become well known in our career fields. It was very hard adjusting to distance learning when in the previous two quarters I was able to experience some freedom at UCI and meet new people. But when you're constantly sitting in your room, staring at a Zoom screen, taking notes and not having that working-life balance that you used to have, it was a very difficult process. I could see it in my students because they were burnt out and they couldn't find the motivation to complete any of their assignments. One of the mentors from the Cambodian Family and I wanted to highlight mental health. Lately, [the nonprofit] realized how important mental health is for people in all age ranges so they've held mental health activities, especially for seniors."

LEYNA ASHLEY TRAN
Vietnamese American, Public Health Sciences major

Tran was born and raised in Orange County while her parents immigrated to California from Vietnam in the 1980s. For her, the VOICE project was a chance to broadcast an important topic that resonated with her. In February 2020, her now 93-year-old grandmother needed hospice care. Tran's family was able to provide the care

from their home. Her work focused on her grandmother's hospital bed in the middle of the living room.

"I think the most impactful picture that I haven't taken was of my grandmother's hospital bed," Tran said. "Throughout the entire pandemic, I hadn't realized how much it impacted me. I realized after our [focus group] presentation, there are also other students, community health partners and project leads that had also felt the same impact of helplessness and sadness about those in our family who won't be with us for long. We had taken the time throughout the pandemic to really feel closer with our families and to create stronger bonds, which I was really grateful for... At the time when I took that photo, I was having negative feelings and thinking negative thoughts. I was remembering the time that she was in the hospital and she was practically unresponsive to us when we talked to her. I wanted to reflect on that feeling [in the black-and-white photo]."

JESSICA-GABRIELA RAMIREZ
Filipino and Mexican American, Public Health Policy major

In the middle of a rise in anti-Asian sentiment and COVID-19, Ramirez wanted to get involved in the project that addressed the social and political turmoil she was witnessing. But she



Courtesy Leyna Tran

LEYNA TRAN'S family cares for her 93-year-old grandmother, who entered hospice care in February 2020, from their own living room.



Courtesy Jessica-Gabriela Ramirez

JESSICA-GABRIELA RAMIREZ helps her father videotape a loved one's funeral.

was hesitant at first. She didn't know where she fit within the AAPI community since she is both Asian American and Mexican American. She said the VOICE project gave her a chance to speak her truth. One of her significant photos captured what it was like attending a funeral service for her grandfather.

"I had taken a photo of my dad and it was just our hands," Ramirez said. "His hands are calloused and more aged compared to mine. It was a contrast of generation. Some of the student researchers pointed this out to me, and I had not realized this myself, but

the green tent is a very large symbol for funerals. In this moment, we were mourning a death due to COVID-19. The person who had passed away was my lolo [grandfather]. He lived in the United States and sponsored my dad to come over from the Philippines. I was watching my dad capture these last moments at the funeral procession. I didn't take the picture intentionally. He was having issues trying to figure out his smartphone because he's not very tech savvy. I was still [video] recording, and I accidentally recorded my hand helping his."

SIDRA ALI
Pakistani American, Public Health Sciences major

Ali's main sense of community is through her mosque. Before COVID-19, she usually went to the Islamic Center of Yorba Linda on weekends and during Ramadan to break fast. Although her mosque is open this year with social distancing practices in place, Ali didn't feel comfortable going. In her work, she captured one of the few activities she was able to do at home.

"One year ago, I took a picture of my hand with henna on it," Ali said. "That picture was really impor-



Courtesy Sidra Ali

APPLYING HENNA with family was one of the first social activities that Sidra Ali was able to engage at home with her family as a result of COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings.

tant to me because it was one tradition we still have that I was able to do during COVID. We couldn't go to the mosque and we couldn't pray with our community. But we were still able to have henna, which is traditionally female. I was still able to get dressed up and do that with my two younger sisters and my mom."

CYNTHIA FOK
Chinese American, Public Health Sciences major

Fok moved back to her Sacramento hometown



Courtesy Cynthia Fok

CYNTHIA FOK captures a once busy alleyway in San Francisco's Chinatown and a mural that it includes the words "housing for all" and imagery representing Chinese American's history of resistance.

during COVID-19. Although she wasn't able to engage with O.C. communities in person, she's done so through Zoom. Some of her work is centered on Sacramento. At one point, she traveled to San Francisco, where she took a photo of a mural in a nearly empty alleyway that used to be busy pre-pandemic.

"One picture that I took fell under the theme of resilience," Fok said. "It was a picture of a mural in [San Francisco's] Chinatown. It wasn't necessarily painted in response to COVID-19. I'm sure it's been there for a few years now. It had [representations of] the Tape vs. Hurley case, which was a Supreme Court case stating that it was unlawful to discriminate against Chinese Americans in the education system. There was another sign that said housing for all. COVID-19 is being called 'China virus,' and it's molding the xenophobic nature of our country. Many people were attacked on the street solely on their race. I thought this mural was a good reminder of the resilience in the Chinese American community and our ability to fight back, regardless of the oppression that we faced."

vera.castaneda@latimes.com
Twitter: @vera_fyd

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